

# A Workshop on the Management Needs to Minimize Vessel Collisions with Whales in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and other National Marine Sanctuaries

September 3 - 5, 2003 Wailea Marriott, an Outrigger Resort, Maui, Hawai'i

## Fact Sheet

### PURPOSE:

NOAA's Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (HIHWNMS) Advisory Council (SAC) and its partners will sponsor a workshop to assess ship strike risks to whales in Hawai'i and to identify possible actions to reduce the occurrence of vessel/whale collisions in Hawaiian waters and throughout the National Marine Sanctuary System

### GOALS:

Resource managers scientists, and representatives of the maritime community will examine the following goals:

- (1) Review available information on the risks of vessels hitting whales and the factors affecting the magnitude of those risks;
- (2) Identify possible measures to reduce the risk of whales being hit by different types and sizes of vessels keeping in mind vessel operating characteristics and constraints;
- (3) Review effectiveness of regulations relating to whale encounters and collisions in Hawaiian waters; and
- (4) Prepare a summary report with preliminary recommendations for the Chair of NOAA's HIHWNMS Advisory Council Vessel Strike Working Group on (1) whether the issue of ships hitting whales merits special attention within the National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) generally, and within the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary (HIHWNMS) in particular, and (2) if so, the research, management, and regulatory actions that should be taken in collaboration with other agencies and industry groups to reduce the risks of such collisions.

### WORKSHOP PROCESS:

To meet these goals, speakers will summarize information on relevant topics including: the distribution, abundance, and behavior of humpback whales in Hawai'i; the response of whales to vessels and vessel noise and technological options for preventing ship strikes (e.g., acoustic alarms); the occurrence of ship collisions in Hawai'i, Alaska, and elsewhere and factors related to those collisions; actions that have been taken and planned to mitigate collisions between North Atlantic right whales and ships; patterns and plans concerning commercial and recreational vessel traffic in Hawai'i, including plans to develop a high-speed interisland ferry service; the characteristics, constraints, and economic importance of vessel operations in Hawaiian waters; and the relevant legal authorities and enforcement efforts for implementing related mitigation measures. Each presentation will be followed by a brief discussion period.

Based on presented information and plenary discussions, working groups will be formed to consider possible means of reducing collision risks with various types and classes of vessels. These groups will be asked to identify and assess possible actions that vessel operators and resource manager might take to reduce the likelihood of whales being struck, the most appropriate means of implementing actions that are deemed appropriate (e.g., by public education and outreach, voluntary participation programs, regulations, etc.), and possible research and monitoring needs.

Based on the presentations and working group deliberations, participants will be asked to consider what policies and actions, if any, NOAA's HIHWNMS SAC Working Group should recommend to the SAC to guide research, management, and regulatory actions to minimize ship strike risks.

### STEERING COMMITTEE:

Brad Barr, Senior Policy Advisor and East Coast, Gulf of Mexico, and Great Lakes Regional Coordinator, NMSP  
Jim Coon, Business/Commerce Representative, HIHWNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council  
Bill Friedl, Honolulu County Representative, HIHWNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council  
Dale Hazlehurst, Manager, Marine Operations-Hawaii, Matson Navigation Company, Inc.  
David Laist, Senior Policy and Program Analyst, Marine Mammal Commission  
Jack Laufer, Commercial Shipping Representative, HIHWNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council  
Naomi McIntosh, Sanctuary Manager, HIHWNMS  
Greg Silber, Large Whale Coordinator, NOAA Fisheries Office of Protected Species  
Jeff Walters, Sanctuary Co-manager, State of Hawai'i, Department of Land and Natural Resources  
Reg White, Whale Watching Representative, HIHWNMS Sanctuary Advisory Council

